Panchayati Raj

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
7 - MAY 1962
RURAL ... CENTRE

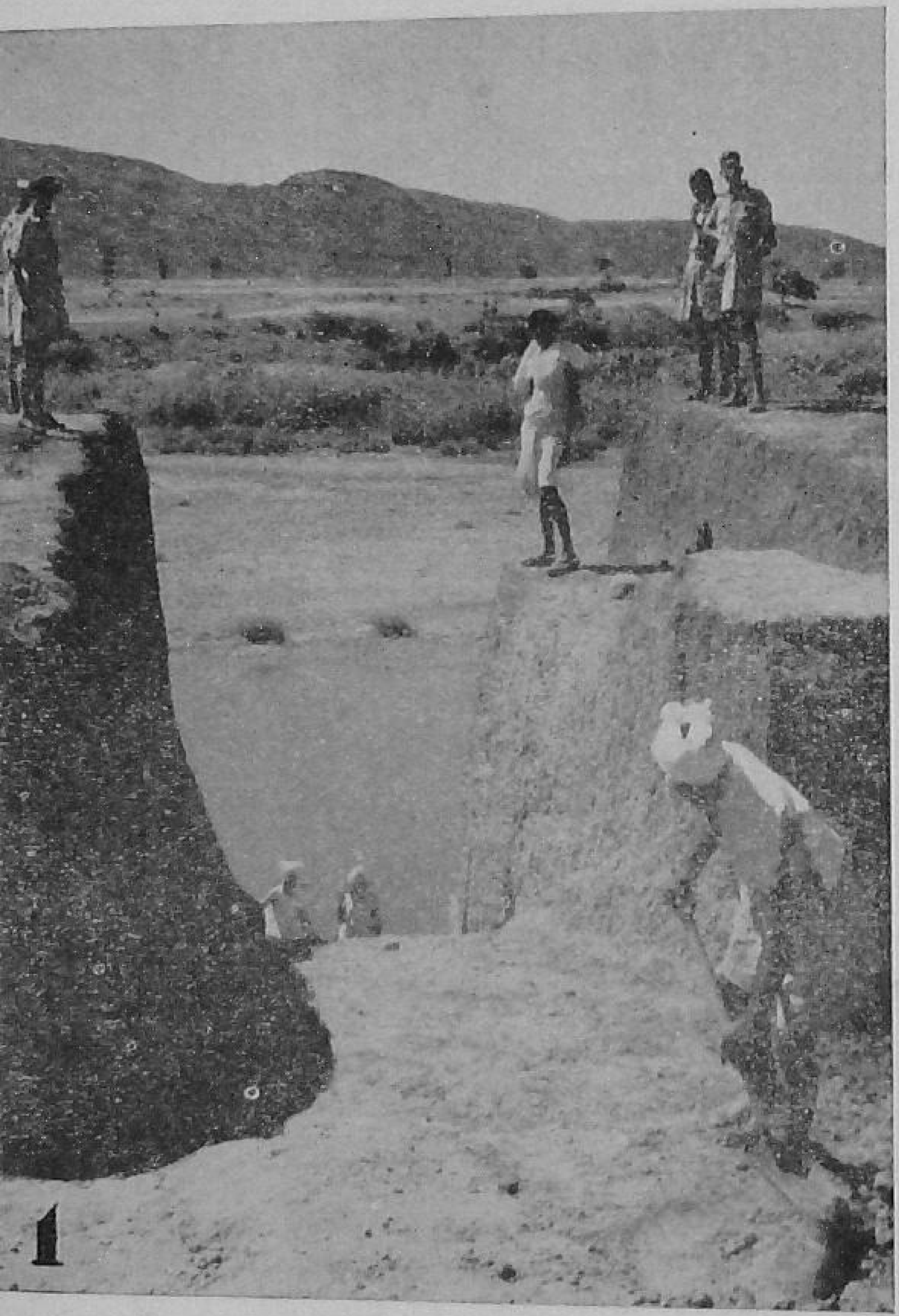
MASTERJI

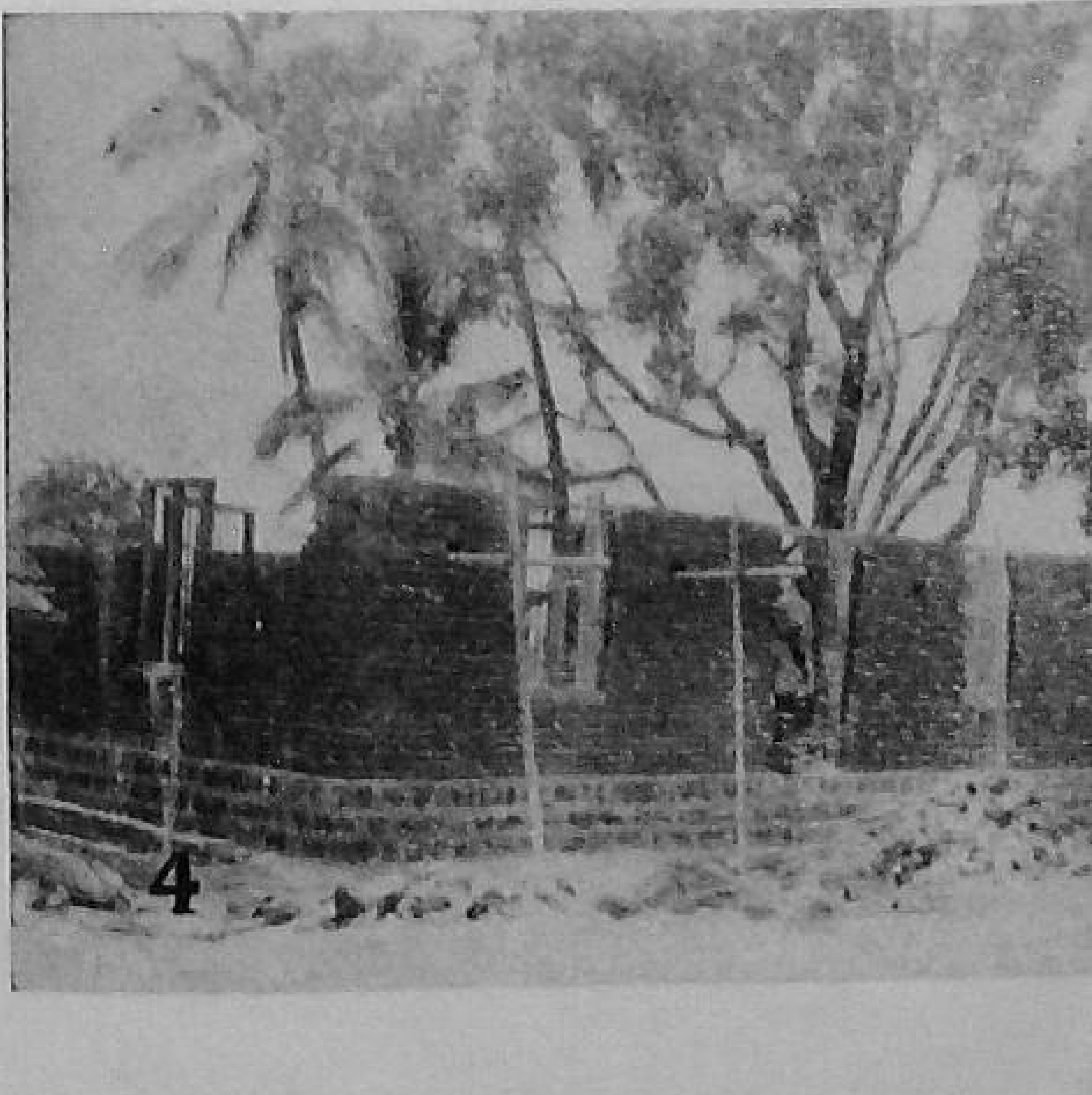
KUNDAN LAL, a Harijan by birth and cowherd boy till 18 years of age, became a weaving instructor and social worker through perseverance and hard work. (See the story inside.)

APRIL 1962

MADRAS POLICE & DEVELOPMENT WORKS

1. The Madras Police undertook the construction of a revetment wall at Theethipalayam.

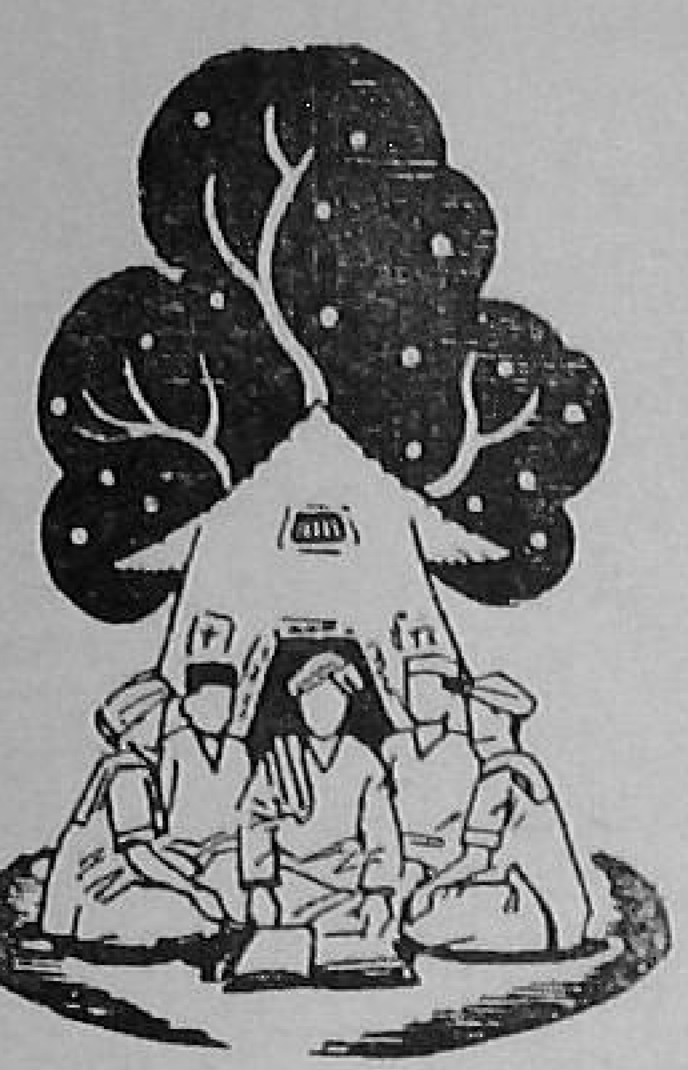




2. The Police Jawans are busy levelling a road surface.

3. A childrens' play ground has been constructed at Theethipalayam.

4. The construction of a school building also was undertaken at Palapatti.



Vol. III APRIL 1962 No. 1
CHAITRA-1884

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BUSINESS NOTICE

Single Copy : 15 nP.
Annual : Rs. 1·25

All enquiries regarding agency and rates of subscription and advertisements may be addressed to the Publications Division, Old Secretariat, Delhi-6. Editorial correspondence may be addressed to the Editor, *Panchayati Raj*, Ministry of Community Development & Cooperation, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi.

LETTERS

"Adopted Family" Scheme

Sir,

THE SCHEME as suggested by Shri B. K. Bhuyan is appreciated by us all. But there is one danger. It is likely to curtail the attention of Block officials towards other families in the village, as they have to and should give preference to that particular adopted family. The competition among all the Block Extension staff to show good progress with respect to their particular adopted families will aggravate this tendency all the more. Moreover, the pampering of one family alone to the exclusion of others will give rise to feelings of jealousy amongst the other families.

These model schemes had some value at the infant stage of the Community Development Programme. But they seem to be unnecessary at the present stage when the C.D. programme has already caught the imagination of the villagers. Prize competition schemes like those of the best farmers and the best Gram Sahayaks are already there to induce individuals to put in their best efforts. But the Extension workers should give equal attention, equal chance and equal preference to all families in the village. Agricultural production plans, demonstration plots and Exhibitions of all types of modern implements should continue to be held at the Block or village levels for the benefit of all the people and not just a few selected families. Then only will the development of the community take place in a proper manner.

20-2-62
Development Block,
M. Bidar (C. Rly.)
Mysore State.

Yours etc.
S. G. Lingarasaiah,
Progress Assistant

* * * *

Sir,

My congratulations to Shri B. K. Bhuyan for his wonderful idea on the "Adopted family scheme". If the Block Development Officers, E.O.s and especially S.E.O.s and Village Level Workers took interest in implementing the scheme, it is bound to lead to excellent results which will be lasting in character. I believe even the non-officials like Panches, Pradhans etc. could also cooperate by adopting families for their all round development. The scheme needs a trial. The officials of this Block wish it a god-speed.

16-2-62
Pre-Extension Block,
Saundatti,
Belgaum Distt.

Yours etc.
K. S. Kale,
V.L.W.

Sir,

The 'adopted family' scheme suggested by Shri Bhuyan leads one to the conclusion that it is only a well-to-do family whose all round development can be achieved along the indicated lines. Take for instance, literacy in the family. It is only in a well-to-do family that all the members including the wife and children will be literate. Again, it is only a rich farmer having a fairly big farm who is capable of adopting all the improved methods of agriculture such as the use of adequate fertilisers, improved implements etc. A kitchen garden can be laid out in the backyard of the house only by a man of means who has got enough residential accommodation. Similarly only a fairly rich family in the village can afford to take to balanced diet. No one can deny the desirability of introducing in a family the various steps suggested in the 'adopted family' scheme. But the point is: Can our villagers afford to do so under their present economic conditions? I am afraid, most of them—more than 80% cannot do so. Let us try to evolve a more modest scheme which suits even the poorer sections.

20-2-62 Yours etc.
Hessarghatta *H. Huliyarappa,*
Bangalore. *Gram Sevak.*

* * *

Sir,

With reference to the "Adopted Family" Scheme, proposed by Shri B. K. Bhuyan, S.E.O., I suggest that the social workers, Panches and young men who hold the key to the future destiny should also be allowed to adopt a family each in their village for the all round development of that family. No doubt, the extension officer or B.D.O. who is in charge of the adopted village may play a supervisory and guiding role if and when required. The scheme of "adoption of family" and "the adoption of village" should both run simultaneously. There should be open competition amongst the adopted villages and adopted families separately. This will have a salutary effect and create in the individuals eagerness to learn new improved techniques and to work hard,—qualities of character that lead to excellence in any sphere of activity.

Yours etc.
D. R. Patel, S.E.O.

Dt. 8-2-62
Banknedi Block,
Distt. Hoshangabad,
Madhya Pradesh.

* * *

Sir,

The "Adopted Family" scheme proposed by Shri B. K. Bhuyan, S.E.O., appearing in the January 1962 issue of Panchayati Raj, is no doubt a good scheme but it is not enough if a single family is "adopted" by the E.O.s or V.L.W.s at this stage after a lapse of 10 years since the Community Development scheme was introduced in our country. It would be more appropriate if all the items recommended by the S.E.O., are introduced in all the families in the adopted village.

The readers of the Panchayati Raj might feel interested in a valuable scheme outlined by Shri Hashim Ali Khan, I.A.S., Deputy Commissioner, Panchayat Raj, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh. The scheme lays emphasis on voluntary efforts of the people in the village adopted for intensive work. The following minimum programme has been visualised under the scheme:

1. Construction of compost pits on scientific lines so that there is at least one compost pit for each acre of wet cultivation and one for at least 4 acres under dry cultivation.

2. Green manure seeds to be distributed for each and every field.

3. Line *Prosopis* fencing to be introduced.

4. Japanese method paddy cultivation to be introduced in all fields under wet cultivation particularly in those having assured water supplies.

5. Demonstration plots, both cultural and varietal to be taken up.

6. Construction of drains on either side of the villages and morromming of all internal roads.

7. Manufacture of cheap bricks and tiles by voluntary efforts of the villagers. These may be supplied free of cost to the poor in order that old huts may be replaced by tiled houses.

8. Establishment of grain banks with the active participation of all the villagers.

(*Continued on page* 13)

Wanted : MEN OF HONESTY AND SELFLESS SERVICE

WANTED: *about thirty lakh persons to serve in the villages of India as Zila Pramukhs, Pradhans and Sarpanches under Panchayati Raj and as Presidents and Secretaries of Co-operative Societies.*

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: *They should be men of integrity, with a spirit of service, faith in democratic principles and have organising ability and skill for planning & administration.*

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS: *Ability to read and write.*

DUTY HOURS: *They will have to devote at least 3 to 4 hours daily in the discharge of their duties. Those working on higher jobs such as Pradhans of Samitis, Zila Pramukhs and Presidents of Co-operative Societies may have to work even upto six or seven hours a day.*

PAY AND ALLOWANCES: *No pay. Those who are required to attend meetings held at a distance from their home, might get some T.A. or fixed honorarium in lieu thereof.*

If there were such an advertisement appearing in the columns of a newspaper, what do you think, will be the response ? Will it be possible to get such a large number of public servants having the required qualifications for the various posts referred to above ? It is on a correct answer to this question that the success or failure of the Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj movements in rural India depends.

Let us analyse the issues closely. We need a large volume of leadership at various levels,—the village, Block and the district to take charge of duties both under the Panchayati Raj and the Sahakari Samaj. We will get an idea of the hugeness of this task-force when we realise that under Panchayati Raj, we need 16 lakh Panches, two lakh Sarpanches, two lakh Up-Sarpanches, 325 Pramukhs and 5,000 Pradhans. Similarly, about 10 lakh persons are required to serve as Presidents and Secretaries to manage and control Co-operative Societies of different types in the villages. Not a small army this of nearly 30 lakh people !

NATURE OF WORK

The jobs are of diverse nature and involve varying grades of responsibility, skill and character on the part of the persons holding the charge. The job of Panches demands honesty of character, a progressive outlook and capacity to influence people. They need devote comparatively less time, barely two or three days in a month in the service of the people. The Up-Sarpanches and Sarpanches have to shoulder comparatively a greater responsibility. They have to be honest, sincere men with a skill for organisation and planning. They should be capable of devoting a few hours in the service of the villagers every day. They should be preferably literate persons. The qualities of character, skill and dedication of spirit demanded of the Pradhans of Block Samitis and Pramukhs of Zila Parishads are of a still higher order. They should be men enjoying such economic independence that they can afford to devote six to seven hours a day in the service of the people. Similarly, the jobs of Presidents and Secretaries of the Co-operative Societies at the village level demand business acumen, an aptitude for economic affairs besides a spirit of selfless service. Those manning jobs at higher levels in the Sahakari Samaj organisation are required to bring to bear on their assignments comparatively greater sense of responsibility, economic understanding and a spirit of dedicated service.

(Continued on page 13)

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICES

K. A. GAFOOR

UNDER THE Panchayati Raj set-up, the Village Panchayats and all the other higher organisations are so deeply involved in the administrative functions that they cannot pay enough attention to social services other than those linked up with the community development programmes. It is, therefore, imperative that the voluntary social services sector should be developed independently. It may perhaps be argued that all the members of the Panchayats are voluntary workers as they are not employed in any capacity. This is true, but the fact remains that they are preoccupied with village administration and development work. It is for this reason that we have to strengthen voluntary sector by encouraging new workers to enter the field of social work and by arranging for their guidance and training.

OLD CONCEPT

Unfortunately, the trend in the social welfare field has all along been towards institutionalisation. Any social problem that comes to notice, is sought to be solved by starting a new institution in which all the affected persons are sought to be put in, after tearing them away from their home, family and society. The process is, if I may say so, very complicated and a person once caught in this web has little chance to see himself set free and re-established in the society in a normal way. First, there is an observation home, an institution for his care and then still another for his after-care. It is just like what they used to do with mad people in the mad-houses. Later on, things improved and patients were taken to mental assylums. Now they are psycho-analysed and treated just like others for their mental ailment. So also our concepts of social welfare have to change radically and for this new type of schools of social work will have to be opened to educate the man of the village, so that he is better equipped to volunteer to help his fellow beings in their distress.

THE PROGRAMME

The Panchayati Raj is opening up an entirely new field for the social services and specially in the voluntary sector. After taking into consideration local conditions each Panchayat Samiti may determine a programme of social services which the voluntary organisations can take up with advantage. Nutrition, family planning, literacy and social-education, persuading parents to send their children to schools, beautification of homes, recreational activities, improvement of the economic conditions, specially of the weaker sections of the community are some of the subjects which voluntary social workers might undertake to carry out. It will be absolutely necessary for them to organise at least one good Mahila Mandal or Women's Centre, with a Balwadi, and Adult education centre with a poultry or kitchen garden unit attached to it. They may also organise cultural activities to bring all sections of the community together; arrange discussion groups and newspaper reading centres to raise the intellectual standards, and provide specialised services for the physically and mentally handicapped, and correctional programmes for the delinquent children. To achieve this, a large number of individuals will have to be trained in organisations and institutions suited for the purpose. Then and then only the Panchayat Raj will be a complete success.

INVESTMENT IN MAN

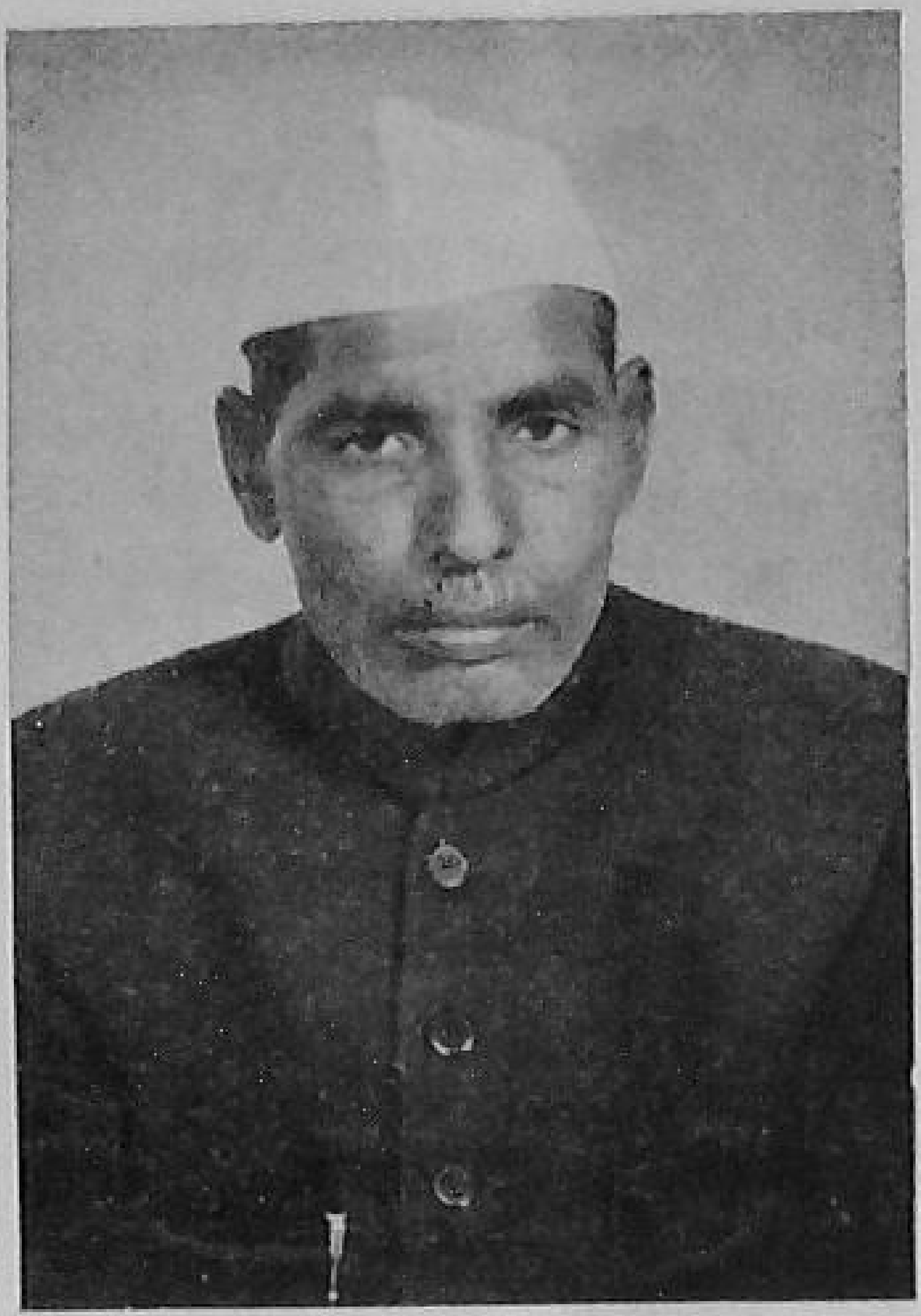
To meet the challenge of Panchayati Raj, the national voluntary organisations and their counterparts in the States should also chalk out a programme of decentralisation and go deeper down into the rural areas and establish contacts with the District Councils, Block Samitis and the Village Panchayats. The Third Five Year Plan has a provision of Rupees 25 crores for programme of social welfare that are to be implemented by voluntary organisations with the assistance of the Central and State Governments. This, of course, covers the activities of the Central and State Social Welfare Boards which give grants-in-aid to various voluntary organisations for activities relating to child welfare, social and moral hygiene, social defence, care and after-care services of the physically and mentally handicapped, juvenile delinquents, vagrants, beggars etc. This expenditure is going to be an "investment in man" and this will pay handsome dividends in the Fourth Five Year Plan. The results and achievements will not be visible or identifiable till then.

MASTERJI

Vishnu Dutt

NOT FAR from the capital city of Delhi, lives in a small village Shahabad, 48 year old Shri Kundan Lal—populary known as Masterji. Born in a poor Harijan family, without any opportunity for education, working as a cowherd boy for twelve years of his early life, he is to-day serving as a Weaving Instructor in a Government Industrial School. His only absorbing passion of life is to teach and to serve others. His is a living example to dispel the doubts of those who think that the poor illiterate villagers cannot provide the competent leadership so necessary for the success of Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj.

My visit to him a few days ago was rewarding and my faith in the capacity, intelligence and spirit of selfless service of our villagers was further strengthened. The house he lives in, is a model of beauty and cleanliness. It has a bathroom and a seperate kitchen. In a corner of the open courtyard is a shed for the buffalo. In the other corner is a small thatched shed sheltering a handloom on which the whole family including the children work by turns whenever any of them is free. Besides Masterji the family consists of his wife, one married son, a daughter-in-law and three daughters.



48 year old Shri Kundan Lal, popularly known as Masterji.

Masterji, quite unassuming in manners, narrated to me the story of how he struggled against the bonds of poverty and illiteracy in his early life. "As was the custom in our Harijan families", he said, "My father never thought of sending me to a school. Instead, he put me to the only easily available profession, that of tending the cattle of our neighbours." However he had a keen desire to learn reading and writing. He entered into an agreement with the owners of the cattle he tended that he would charge them annas eight only per cattle in a month, but that they would have to teach him how to read and write. Some literate Zamindar boys taught him the alphabets now and then. In the jungle, while other cowherd boys used to whistle and play, he would labour at the Hindi primer and write the alphabets with finger on sand. In course of time, he began to read as well as write. His desire to read story books grew. But he had no money to purchase any book. He resorted to the time-worn device of "Silla" *i.e.*, collecting the corn-ears left in the field after harvesting. By the way, "Silla" is practised by Harijans and the weaker sections in the villages even today to supplement their meagre income. Kundan Lal got a rupee or so at harvest time by selling the 'Silla' corn. With this money, he purchased the story books and read them over and over again while he tended the cattle in the jungle.

"But how did you become a Weaving Instructor"? I inquired rather impatiently. Masterji gave a broad smile and said, "To become that, I had to quarrel with my father, give a lathi blow to my wife and run away from home with just one rupee in my pocket". Resuming the thread of his story, he said that he became dissatisfied with his life of a cowboy and decided to take to some other job. But where was one to be found? He tried his hands at shoe-making for

Jaimal Singh, son of Masterji. He is a graduate and is now employed in a Government office.

some time. One day, somebody informed him that there was a Government Industrial School in Churiwalan in Delhi and that he could learn weaving there. This fired his imagination. He was a young lad of eighteen now. He placed the proposal before his father but he would have none of it. At last, he resolved to run away from home. But there was an obstacle—his young wife. Masterji told me that he had been married at a very young age as that used to be the prevalent custom in those days. He approached his wife and asked her to give him a rupee for his fare up to the training school. But his wife also did not approve of his idea and refused to part with the rupee. This enraged him so much that he gave a lathi blow to her and she started bleeding. Hearing her cries, his father came in who reproached him a lot. But Kundan Lal was adamant. "I must join the Training School. And here I leave this house for ever......."

So saying, he left the house. While he was going away, his father threw a rupee at him and said, "Take it, scoundrel". He picked the coin and ran away to join the school.

He had no money either for food, clothing or utensils or even to pay the tuition or admission fees. But he was lucky to get admission for the headmaster was a kind-hearted person who took pity on him, seeing his eagerness to learn. For a week, he got his food from the headmaster's house. But then his self-respect asserted itself and he decided not to take his meals any more at the headmaster's house. He told the headmaster that since he had been able to make his own arrangements for his food, he would not take meals at his house. He had just one rupee with him. He decided to live on it as long as he could. Everyday, he used to purchase parched grams worth one or two annas and thus managed to carry on for ten days. In the mean time, the headmaster, with a view to help him, secured for him some part-time odd jobs on payment basis. After his training classes were over, he would serve as a coolie with a nearby business man and earn a few annas as wages every day. For nearly two months, he served as an attendant in an Exhibition and got Rs. 30/- as his remuneration. He had now picked up weaving. The headmaster got some orders for him and he would weave cloth in his spare time. In that way, he earned as well as learnt. Weaving in spare time also gave him enough practice so that he soon became efficient in the art. The authorities were so pleased with him that he was granted a scholarship of Rs. 5 per month. His economic worries were now over and he looked forward to complete the full two years' training course with confidence.

Six months had passed but Kundan Lal did not send any information about his whereabouts to his father or wife at home. His thoughts now turned to them. He was so economical in his habits that he had saved rupees one hundred by that time. He took this money and went home. He fell at the feet of his father and placed the money before him. Tears rolled down the eyes of both and they embraced each other. His father's joy knew no bounds and he blessed him a happy future.

Kundan Lal returned to the school and continued his

Shrimati Muthri, wife of Masterji. She too holds a diploma in weaving.

training with singular devotion. At the end of his two years' term of training, he stood first in the school. Besides a diploma, he got rupees twenty five and a handloom as prize.

His ambition was fulfilled. He had found his career. Teaching the art of weaving and social service became the two passions of his life. His career has seen many ups and downs but whether at home or in the village or in a training school, he is essentially a weaving master. As early as 1940, he worked as weaving instructor in the Ingram Institute at Ghaziabad of which J. C. Pace was the Principal. He gave up the job during the 'Quit India' movement. Again, he served as weaving instructor for three years in the first Community Development Project inaugurated by the Prime Minister at Alipur (Delhi). At present, he is serving in the same capacity in one of the Industrial Schools run by the Ministry of Rehabilitation. He runs a handloom at his home, too. He has taught weaving to all the members of his family who supplement their income by working at the handloom in their spare hours. Having himself suffered as a result of lack of educational facilities, he has thrown open the same to the members of his family. His son Jaimal Singh is a graduate and is serving in a Government Office. All his daughters go to the village school. Even his wife holds a diploma from an Industrial School. His daughter-in-law too, is read up to Matric. His interest in teaching the art of weaving is so infectious that he has so far trained nearly a hundred people in the profession. His disciples are spread in the neighbouring villages. Whereas in the rest of the villages, the profession of weaving has all but died, in his own village, there are about twenty handlooms still working for which the credit goes to him. He has formed a Cooperative Society of weavers of which he is the president. His love for weaving has earned him the title of "Masterji" by which name he is popularly called in the village.

Kundan Lal's another passion is social service. He told me that it was an ordinary Muslim named Abdul Wahab Khan of village Dasua in U.P. who had first drawn him to the national movement in 1940. Constructive work rather than political has always attracted him. At present, he is engaged in social service work on behalf of the Bharat Sevak Samaj. His wife Shrimati Muthri Devi runs a tailoring and knitting centre for the benefit of the women-folk of the village. She also looks after a milk centre where free milk is supplied to the children. Out of his meagre savings, Shri Kundan Lal got a common drinking water well constructed for the benefit of the villagers. This is how Masterji passes his days in joy and contentment he finds in the service of others.

ASSISTANCE TO SMALL INDUSTRIES

DO YOU KNOW?

1. Government assistance to small industries is now available at many stages, beginning with the planning for setting up a unit, followed by technical assistance in manufacturing processes, training of artisans, financial assistance for working capital and for buying machines and tools and marketing of products.

2. Financial assistance is provided through cash loans and special schemes for supply of machinery on hire-purchase basis introduced in 1956.

3. Machines are supplied under the hire-purchase scheme both for starting a new industry and for augmenting the existing capacity as well as for the replacement of old and out-dated machines.

4. Applications from small entrepreneurs for the supply of machines are accepted by the National Small Industries Corporation, a Government undertaking which operates the scheme.

5. The hirers are required to pay an earnest money of 20 per cent of the value of machines and the balance is payable in half-yearly instalments over a period of seven years.

6. The rate of interest is 4½ per cent for machines valued up to Rs. 15,000 and 6 per cent if the value exceeds that amount. For industrial cooperatives, these rates are 3½ per cent and 5 per cent respectively.

7. Nearly a hundred different lines of manufacture benefit by the scheme. These include agricultural implements, hosiery, footwear, plastics, toys, cycle parts, sewing machines, printing press, safety matches, pencils and fountain pens, small tools, auto parts and scientific apparatus.

8. In addition to the general hire-purchase scheme, the National Small Industries Corporation has introduced two special schemes, *viz.*, the Bank Guarantee Scheme and the Special Hire-Purchase Scheme for imported machines.

Madras Police and

THE POLICEMAN is a much-dreaded person in India. But he is not so in other countries of the world where he is looked upon as a friend and guide. His face, instead of striking awe and terror, inspires faith and confidence even among ladies and children. This is as it should be. But unfortunately for us, during the British days, the Police was called upon to do unpleasant duties in the name of law & order. This earned them a bad name and estranged them from the people.

After independence, the relationship between the Police and the people has undergone some change for the better. But the past hang-over of suspicion and hatred has not been fully overcome. It is good for neither party. The Police finds it difficult to work satisfactorily and successfully in such an atmosphere. Better relationship between them is, therefore, the need of the hour.

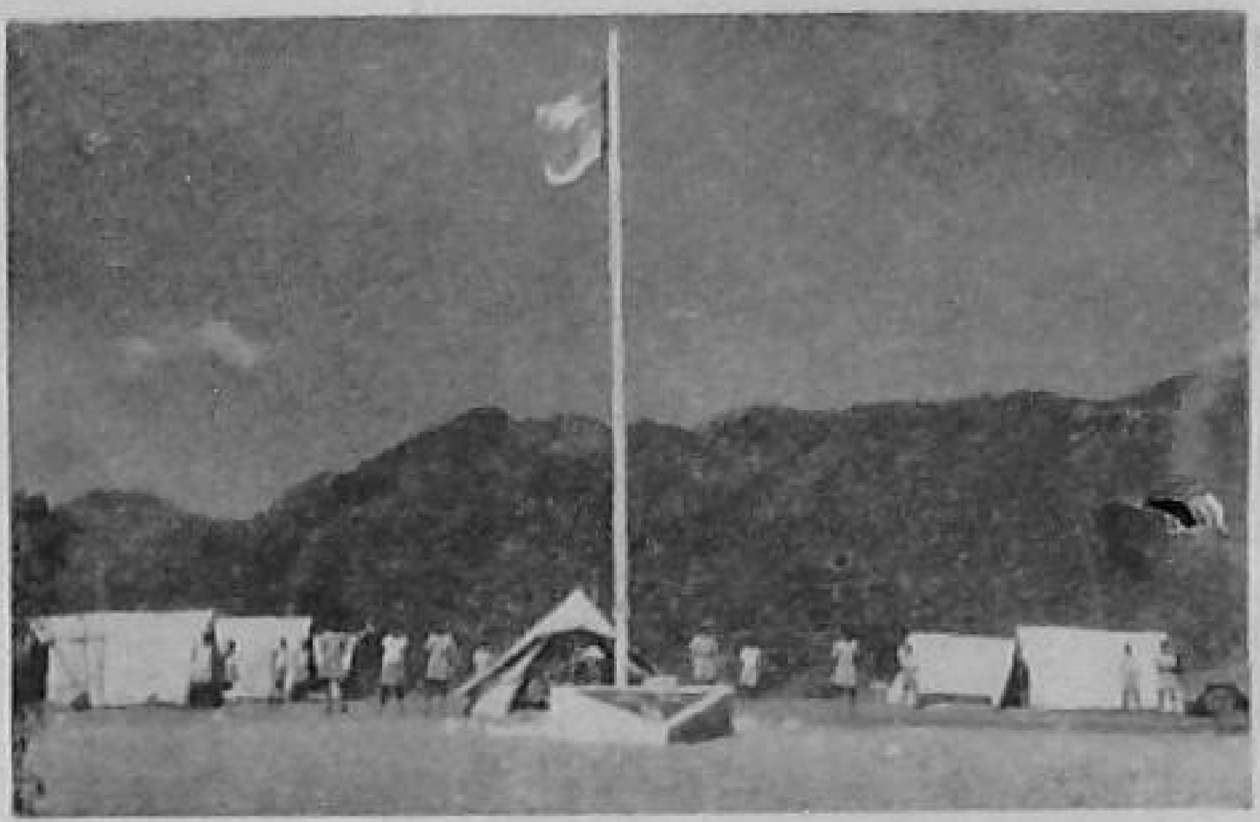
Construction of road at Vellanakottai in Tirunelveli.

Not Gun But Spade

The Madras Police realising its necessity, decided to bring about the desired change through the medium of development works. In addition to its normal responsibilities of maintaining law & order, it undertook development works in some selected villages. Thereby, it hoped to wipe away the past ill-will of the public towards it and to win their hearts.

The Policeman soon appeared in his new role. Instead of a gun in his hand he now enters the village with a spade to dig trenches, construct roads and buildings. With the sweat of his brow, he has effected remarkable improvements in the countryside. Here is a short account of what the police has achieved during the last few years and is still continuing the good work with hope and faith in the future.

In Ramanathapuram district, construction of approach roads connecting several villages was taken in hand. Besides, efforts were made to inculcate discipline in school boys in the villages. An approach road five furlongs in length connecting Kamudhi-Kandapasalai road and Kavadipatti is under construction.



The Police Jawans set up an operation camp at Palapatti village

In Salem district, the first village selected for development work was Thirumalagiri, 5 miles from Salem town. An approach road to the village was repaired and levelled up. A pucca Elementary School building was also built. Besides, a common well for drinking water was constructed. Slip trenches and public latrines were also provided. The entire work took about 3 months. A metalled road was constructed to link Amirthanur to Mechari road.

In Veerapandi village, a 12 furlong road is being built by 20 men of the A.R. Salem working for 6 hours a day.

In Coimbatore district, the Police completed the construction of a School at Palla-

Development Works

patti and a road from Pallapatti to Mettupalayam with the help of 20 Jawans. A children's park was also constructed in Coimbatore City.

In Tiruchirappalli district, a gravel road 2½ furlongs in length from Puthuruthamanur to the Primary Health Centre was constructed at a cost of about Rs. 2,000/-. The construction of a play ground in the local district board elementary school, costing about Rs. 1,000/- is in progress.

In Kanyakumari district, the police undertook to lay out a road of about 1¼ miles in length to connect the main village Kannakurichi with the trunk road at the 8th mile stone on Nagercoil to Colachel.

In Noth Arcot district, a link road about 2 miles in length was constructed up to Molmayoil with the help of 30 Jawans. Some drains were constructed in village K. V. Kuppam. Besides, roads were also levelled and repaired in this village. A Nursery School with a verandah was constructed for Lakshmi Vidyalaya within the compound of the Ladies Club, Vellore.

In Tirunelveli district, several roads, one connecting Tirunelveli-Tankasi road to Vellankottai, one mile in length; the second road 5 furlongs in length connecting village Nallur and Tenkasi-Tirunelveli road and the third road, two furlongs in length, linking Karayadipacheri with Tiruchendur-Tirunelveli main road, have been laid.

In Chingleput district, a police party consisting of a Jamedar, 10 Head Constables and 98 Jawans under a Sergeant undertook the construction work of a Harijan colony consisting of 10 houses at Sembarambakkam village, one Elementary School building and a reading room. An approach road from the main road was also laid. In Velacheri, the Police dug a well and constructed an additional hall in the existing rural dispensary building. In Kodambakkam, an approach road, one furlong in length was laid.

In Thanjavur district, a road was laid between Ganapathiagraparam Harijan colony and the main road.

In Madurai Urban district, the Police undertook village development work in Karisalpatty, Thayavery village, Thirumangalam taluk and built a culvert and an approach road linking the village to the G.S.T. Road. A community hall as well as a Harijan colony was also built.

In South Arcot district, a kacha road, six furlongs in length, was constructed from Villupuram taluk to Salaiagaran. In Kudirachandal in Kallakurichi taluk, a well was dug and a children's park was constructed. One mile long kacha road connecting the villages of Malpathi and Pallaiyarkuppam was also laid.

As a result of a large number of development works having been completed by the Police, the people have begun to cherish good-will towards them. Having worked shoulder to shoulder with the police Jawans in various development works, the villagers now look upon them as their friends and guides. The Community Development work has provided the key to establishing good relationship between them.

The Chief Secretary and I. G. Police, Madras visiting the Children's Park at Coimbatore.

Inter-University Debates

(By our Special Correspondent)

"PANCHAYATI RAJ IS THE KEY TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROGRESS OF THE COUNTRY."

THE ABOVE motion was the subject of an inter-university debate on Panchayati Raj held in the Delhi University Campus on the 15th February, 1962. The debate was organised by the Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation in collaboration with the Planning Forum of the Delhi University. Shri Shriman Narain, member Planning Commission, presided over the function. Twelve students already selected as the best at the University level debates by the respective Universities of Delhi, Baroda, Vallabhbhai Vidyapith (Gujarat), Osmania, Orissa, Agra, Gandhigram Rural Institute (Madras), Venkateswar, Aligarh, U.P. Agricultural, and Indian Agricultural Research Institute (New Delhi) participated in the function. Shri N. K. Singh, of Delhi University, Shri N. A. Krishna Murthi of Gandhigram Rural Institute (Madras) and Shri A. B. Khadar of Osmania University stood first, second and third respectively, thus winning the prizes of Rs. 500, 300 & 200 respectively. Only Shri Krishnamurthy supported the motion.

FOR AND AGAINST

Some of the points made by the speakers in favour of the motion were that Panchayati Raj was necessary in order to provide a broad base to democracy in the country; that it gave to the rural people an opportunity which they never had in the past to plan and administer their own affairs; that it was an effective medium of mobilising local resources; that it removed evils like inefficiency, delay and corruption inherent in a centralised administration; and that it fostered a sense of community feeling among the villagers at various levels. Those who spoke against the motion including Shri N. K. Singh who got the first prize did not object to the ideal of Panchayati Raj as such but referred to the inexpediency of ushering in Panchayati Raj under the prevalent socio-economic conditions in the country. Shri Singh thought that Panchayati Raj was an end and not a means and that it would not help bring about economic progress because of lack of capital and inadequate rate of savings in the rural areas. Some of the dangers of Panchayati Raj as pointed out by other speakers who spoke against the motion were that the villagers had not enough knowledge about their civic rights and responsibilities and that they were superstitious, caste and faction-ridden.

THE CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the function Shri Shriman Narain, in his speech indicated the great importance that the Planning Commission attached to Panchayati Raj. Referring to the dangers of the Panchayati Raj mentioned by the speakers during the debate, he said that these did exist but if proper care and safeguards were taken, these would not pose as obstacles or prove harmful. He pleaded for faith in our people who, he thought, are quite capable of shouldering the responsibilities and can deliver the goods. He wanted that Panchayati Raj bodies should engage themselves in economic activities to make the villages prosperous. Political freedom without economic freedom was meaningless, a shadow without substance. He, therefore, urged that the Panchayats, besides stepping up agricultural production should also undertake village and small industries on an extensive scale to wipe out unemployment and to raise the poor economic condition of the villagers. Shri Narain also expressed the view that the parliamentary system was not suited to the genius of our people, and that it should not be introduced at least in the villages. On the

other hand, he thought that panches elected unanimously by the whole village, inspired by the spirit of *'Panch Parmeshwar'* as in the past, would prove more useful and the village community would be saved from avoidable internal conflicts and dissensions.

CO-OPERATION

"IN AN UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IS MORE DESIRABLE THAN THROUGH PRIVATE ENTERPRISE OR PUBLIC SECTOR."

A NATIONAL inter-university debate on Co-operation on the above subject was held in the Vivekanand Hall of the Delhi School of Economics on the 19th February, 1962 under the Chairmanship of Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao. Thirteen students already selected as the best by the respective Universities of Andhra, Agra, Aligarh, Delhi, Venkateswara, Utkal, Baroda, Patna, Jadavpur, U.P., (Agricultural) Udaipur Rural Institute, and Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi participated in the contest. Shri Amritanand Das, a student of 1st Year B.A. from Jadavpur University, Calcutta, got the first prize of Rs. 500/- Kumari Naseema Begum and Shri N. K. Singh from Venkateswar University and Delhi University respectively got the second and third prizes of Rs. 300/- and Rs. 200/- each.

AGAINST

The non-controversial nature of the subject perhaps took away much of the edge of criticism by the speakers who spoke against the motion. As rightly pointed out by one of the prize-winning speakers Shri N. K. Singh that it was not the desirability but the feasibility of the co-operative sector as compared to the private enterprise or public sector that was under dispute. If the debate was on the latter point, he said that he would be the first person to cross the floor of the House. The chairman also later referred to this in his concluding speech and seemed to agree with this view. Consequently, the speaker on the opposition side had to struggle against this natural handicap. But some of them did fairly well and had a few homethrusts to give to the speakers in favour. They pointed out that Co-operation could not succeed because of local group rivalries and party factions prevalent in the villages, and also because there was a woeful lack of sound, dedicated leadership to guide the movement at various levels. It was also mentioned that in the Indian conditions, the co-operative method was suitable only for service activities *e.g.*, supply, marketing and credit and that in the sphere of productive activities whether industrial or agricultural, it could do very little as the Indian artisan and the farmer was individualistic in attitude. Moreover, it was argued that the way in which official support was being given to the co-operative movement, was only rendering it crippled and lifeless. The result of this spoon-feeding was that a number of bogus co-operative organisations had sprung up with a view either to circumvent legislative measures or just to exploit the Government assistance. That tended only to weaken the co-operative movement.

FOR

The arguments advanced on the side of the motion were quite forceful. One of the main arguments offered was that the Co-operative Sector had always before it the aim of "social gain" and not that of "private profit" and that it ensured democratic freedom which was lacking to some extent in State enterprise. Thus the Co-operatives had all the advantages of both the other systems and none of their drawbacks. Besides, the co-operative method provided an unfailing weapon to the weak and the oppressed against their being exploited by the middle-man and contractors. Co-operative farming was the only corrective to the uneconomic holdings which constitute the greatest bottleneck in the improvement of agriculture in our country.

(*Continued on page 15*)

Questions and Answers

VIDUR

Question: What is meant by the three-tier system of the Panchayati Raj? What are the functions of the Panchayati Raj bodies at various levels? How and why are they inter-linked with each other?

Answer: Under the Panchayati Raj pattern, three bodies have been set up at the village, Block and district levels to facilitate the planning and implementation of the development programme in an effective manner. These bodies have been charged with various duties and functions keeping in view the principle that no higher body should attempt to do what a lower body can do itself. Thus generally the village body confines itself to the planning and execution of programmes within the jurisdiction of the village, the body at the Block level co-ordinates and supervises the activities of Panchayats within the Block area. It has direct charge of activities that lie beyond the control of a single village, such as roads, minor irrigation works, middle schools and dispensaries etc. The district body is mainly an advisory and co-ordinating body for the developmental activities affecting the whole district. It approves the budgets of the Block level bodies and allocates funds between them. It may have some executive functions like that of establishing and maintaining Secondary & Vocational Schools and Hospitals. The idea of making the higher body responsible for co-ordinating and supervising the activities of the lower bodies is to ensure their smooth and effective working. For the same reason, they have been inter-linked organically through direct or indirect elections from the lower to the higher bodies.

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Question: The Panchayati Raj institutions differ from State to State in so far as their organisational set-up and administrative functioning is concerned. Would it not have been better if a uniform policy were followed throughout the country?

Answer: Panchayat is a State subject under the Constitution and therefore every State is free to have its own legislation and to set up Panchayati Raj institutions of its own choice suited to the local genius and requirements. Ours is a very big country and the various states differ widely from each other in language, ways of living and socio-economic conditions. Consequently, there is plenty of scope of trying out various patterns and alternatives. Accordingly, there has been no insistence on the states to follow a prescribed pattern. However, certain fundamental and basic principles of Panchayati Raj have been emphasised. Almost all the States have tried in their own way to incorporate in their respective legislations these essential principles of Panchayati Raj. They have sought to ensure that :

(a) There is a three-tier structure of local self-governing bodies from the village to the District, the bodies being organically linked up.

(b) There is genuine transfer of power and responsibility to them.

(c) Adequate resources transferred to the new bodies to enable them to discharge these responsibilities.

(d) All developmental programmes at these levels are channelled through these bodies.

(e) The system evolved is such as facilitates further devolution and dispersal of power and responsibilities in the future.

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Question: Why is Panchayati Raj known as the "Grass-root Democracy"? How is it the best form of democracy?

Answer: Panchayati Raj is the logical extension of the principle of democracy from higher to lower levels. If democracy is good at the top,

it must be equally good at the ground level too. From Lok Sabha to Gram Sabha, therefore, constitutes one unified whole democracy. Panchayati Raj is known as the grass-root democracy because it is nearest the ground level. It is the best form of democracy because in a Gram Sabha, the lowest organ of Panchayati Raj, all adult members constitute the House and they participate in the deliberations and decisions directly rather than through representatives. These are like the old Greek City States in which the entire adult population of the city took part. As the area of a constituency becomes larger, it becomes more difficult for the whole population to take part in the deliberations and so comes the system of administration through representatives. Under this set-up the primary voters, after they have elected their representatives for a fixed term, have no direct say or hand in the day-to-day administrative functioning till the next elections. Obviously, the common man cannot have much interest in such a democracy. In order that it might have any meaning for him, it must provide him an opportunity for discussion and participation in every-day administrative matters. Panchayati Raj is such a 'participating democracy'. Ours is the largest democracy in the world. It is Panchayati Raj which gives to it the broadest base and renders it more firm and stable.

WANTED : MEN OF HONESTY AND SELFLESS SERVICE

(Continued from page 3)

MORAL REGENERATION

In so far as their skill and technical competence for the various jobs is concerned, I think, the same can be imparted to them through training courses of different types. Their working knowledge of co-operative rules and regulations, business management, accounting methods, procedures of conducting Panchayat meetings, preparation of plans and budgets etc. can be taught to them through carefully planned training courses. Similarly, other qualities of character like leadership, skill for organising, ability to plan and administer can also be picked up and developed through practical experience. But there is no cut and dried formula for developing essential moral qualities like honesty, spirit of selfless service and dedication to the cause. This is the problem of problems. The goal can be realised through persistent efforts over a number of years. It is possible if the men at the top set the example and create the proper atmosphere. It was how Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, succeeded in transforming the lives of millions of people of our country and brought out self-sacrificing and dedicated leadership at various levels. In this work of moral regeneration, the leaders outside the Government as well as various voluntary and social organisations can play a determining role.

The General Elections and the Panchayati Raj elections have proved beyond doubt that the hearts and minds of our people are essentially sound and that they have faith in democracy. It is equally well-known that consistent with our old culture, the people appreciate moral values of life such as honesty, renunciation and selfless service. Under these circumstances, it is quite possible to find the large number of village leaders equipped with the requisite qualifications to man the Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj institutions at various levels.—*V.D.*

LETTERS

(Continued from page 2)

To implement the above scheme, Village Production Committees are to be formed. The village is to be divided into three divisions and allotted to the (a) Yuvak Mandal, (b) Mahila (Yuvathi) Mandal, and (C) Village Production Committee.

The details of the above scheme can be supplied to those who are interested.

Dt. 13-2-62 Yours etc.

A. D. Venugopal,
Manager, Mallial Block
Panchayat Samithi.

Distt. Karimnagar,
Andhra Pradesh.

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AROUND THE STATES

MANIPUR

DELIMITATION OF GRAM SABHAS

THE ADMINISTRATION has taken steps to divide all its Gram Sabhas into constituencies of suitable sizes. Steps have also been taken to divide the Territory into 40 Nyaya Panchayat circles. Preparation of Family Registers has been completed for all the Gram Sabhas. Besides, Adults Registers have been completed for 80 per cent of the Gram Sabhas.

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ORISSA

DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES

THE STATE Fisheries Department distributed about 5 million fingerlings to the Gram Panchayats during the quarter ending September 1961 for stocking tanks having a water area of about 3,493 acres. The State Government also sanctioned a scheme for the development of Ansupa Lake in the Banki Block in Cuttack District at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.03 lakhs for the development of pisciculture on a large scale.

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GRAM EKAI PROGRAMME

THE SELECTION COMMITTEE for Gram Ekai programme sponsored by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, selected 6 Blocks in the State for implementation of the programme. Three Blocks were kept on the waiting list. Five Gram Panchayats will be selected in each Block, to start with, for undertaking this programme. The remaining Panchayats will be covered according to a phased programme within a period of two years.

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RAJASTHAN

TEACHERS AS PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

WITH A VIEW to obviate the difficulty of non-availability of educated and qualified persons to work as secretaries of the Gram Panchayats in the hilly and desert areas, the State Government decided, as an experimental measure, to appoint primary teachers as secretaries of the Gram Panchayats in addition to their own duties.

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LOANS TO PRIVATE SHEEP BREEDERS

THE STATE Government approved the scheme for advancing loans to private sheep breeders who owned at least 50 sheep. An individual could be advanced a maximum loan of Rs. 1,000 under the scheme.

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RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

RAJASTHAN Electricity Board approved a scheme for rural electrification under which the Board would take up electrification of such villages where at least one-fourth of the estimated cost was given as loan from Panchayat Samiti or any other body and the balance was made available by the State Government or Financial Corporation, if such project was otherwise found remunerative.

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UTTAR PRADESH

ALLOWANCES FOR PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

THE STATE Government decided to pay dearness allowance @ of Rs. 12.50 nP. to the Panchayat Secretaries in the State. The extra expenditure on this account will be shared by the State Government and the Gaon Sabhas on a 50 : 50 basis. The Panchayat Secretaries will also be entitled to travelling allowance, in future, when they are required to go out of their circles.

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CO-OPERATIVE FARMS

FOURTEEN NEW co-operative farming societies, 11 in the pilot project areas and 3 in the non-pilot project areas were registered during January 1962. The total number

of farming co-operatives in the State was 429, with a membership of about 9,500 and the share capital of about Rs. 24.20 lakhs.

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RURAL WATER SUPPLY

A SUM of Rs. 23.5 lakhs was allotted to 73 pre-extension and shadow Blocks in Uttar Pradesh under the local Development Works schemes. The amount would be utilised mainly for rural water supply schemes and to complete the existing works which were lying incomplete for want of funds.

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MID-DAY MEALS

A SCHEME for the supply of mid-day meals in the elementary schools to children of age 6—11 was launched in the scheduled and backward areas. The scheme is being implemented through Panchayat Samitis. The objective of the scheme is to organise and maintain the supply of meals to poor students with the grants provided by the Government and supplemented by contributions from the local people. It is expected that the scheme would help in attracting a large number of students in the backward areas to the schools.

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EDUCATION MAKES HEADWAY

A COMMENDABLE headway was made in the field of education in Uttar Pradesh during the quarter ending December 1961. A record number of primary schools viz., 5,000 mixed and 1,000 exclusively for girls were opened in the rural areas of the State during the quarter.

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CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING CENTRES

TEN CO-OPERATIVE marketing societies and one District Co-operative Development Federation (Haldwani) have been selected for taking up processing work as an adjunct to their normal work against the target of 15 units set for the current year. The remaining 4 units are also expected to be selected shortly.

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MADHYA PRADESH

COLLABORATION WITH C.D. & PANCHAYATI RAJ

A conference of all the important non-official voluntary organisations in the State was convened during January, 1962, to consider the question of their collaboration in the Community Development and Panchayati Raj activities. The organisations agreed to indicate their spheres of activity and the items in which they were particularly interested and for which they were willing to offer their cooperation.

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TRAINING IN FAMILY PLANNING

The Madhya Pradesh Government has been laying considerable stress on the training for family planning. Three training camps were organised in all the Blocks and attempts were made to invite at least one representative from each Gram Sevak circle to participate in the training.

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WOMEN'S PROGRAMME

Instructions were issued by the State Government in regard to the organisation of annual competition of individual women workers and mahila mandals during the year 1962-63.

INTER-UNIVERSITY DEBATES

(*Continued from page 11*)

In conclusion, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao pointed out that it was of course too late in the day to object to the co-operative method. He said that it had been followed with advantage in many countries. The real problem of Co-operatives, according to him, was that of finding out a large volume of honest, dedicated and competent leadership which could be relied upon to lead the Co-operatives at various levels. There was no short cut to produce such leaders overnight or even as a result of a mechnical training carried over a length of time. It was only a dedicated leadership at the top which could bring about the desired revolution in the hearts and minds of the people. He expressed hope and faith in the capacity of our people to develop such leadership in course of time.

FROM THE CENTRE

REVITALISING AGRICULTURAL CREDIT SOCIETIES

THE MINISTRY of Community Development & Co-operation, has in a circular letter to all State Governments, outlined a detailed action programme for the revitalisation of primary agricultural credit societies. Among various measures suggested for achieving the desired goal are: locating societies capable of being revitalised after a thorough scrutiny of their accounts and working; calling upon such societies to consider requisite measures for improving their working and setting targets to be achieved by the end of the year; securing the appointment of a paid clerk to set the matters right; ensuring that the loan applications are sanctioned in time and the first instalment of the loan is distributed promptly; and reviewing the progress of their work.

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IMPORT OF CONSUMER GOODS BY CO-OPS.

THE TERMS and conditions for the import of consumer goods by consumers' co-operatives have been liberalised. This step has been taken in view of the difficulties experienced by consumers' co-operatives in obtaining licences for the import of consumer goods up to their requirements. For purposes of import licences, preference will be given to consumer co-operative societies or apex societies, having large membership or a large turn-over. The working period necessary to make the consumers' co-operatives eligible for import licences has been reduced from three years to two.

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FOLLOWING the recommendation of the Advisory Board on Training, the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation decided to amalgamate the Central Institute of Study and Research in Community Development at Mussoorie and the Institute for Instruction on Community Development at Rajpur (Dehra Dun) into the National Institute of Community Development with effect from 1st April 1962. The National Institute will continue to function at Mussoorie and Rajpur, till it shifts to Rajendranagar (Hyderabad). The Institute will be broadly responsible for: (1) Orientation courses for key personnel including non-officials, engaged in the Community Development and Panchayati Raj programmes; (2) Clearing House of Information on Community Development; (3) Publications; (4) Study and Research programme, through its own staff as well as through the training centres, and the Universities; (5) Academic guidance to Training Centres; (6) Training of Instructors. and (7) Advanced Seminars, Symposia, etc.

ATTACHING BLOCKS TO RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

IT HAS been decided to establish liaison between the blocks and the research institutions located in the States so that the blocks around the research institutions could be used for trials and experimentation by the research workers. This would enable the research workers to gain knowledge of actual field work and provide them with opportunities to conduct experiments under various field conditions. A similar liaison has also been arranged between the Agricultural/Veterinary Colleges/Extension Training Centres etc. It has been suggested that though the research staff may have access to the Block staff, all instructions to them should be routed through the Block Development Officer. The Block staff will in their turn extend full co-operation to the research staff. Whenever research workers are required to carry out any experiments in the field, the Block staff should act as liaison officers between the research workers and the farmers and try to secure the co-operation of the farmers in carrying out the experiments. Wherever any expenditure is involved in this work the proposal must necessarily be placed before the Panchayat Samiti or the Block Development Committee, as the case may be, and action taken according to the decision of that body.

Mounting Operation

The Madras Police, by undertaking development works such as construction of roads, schools and children's parks etc. in various parts of the State, has set up an example for the rest of the country. In the picture, Police Jawans are seen constructing a road at Palapatti village in Coimbatore District.

Printed by the Manager, Government of India Press, Faridabad, and published by the Director, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi-6, on behalf of the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation.

Regd. D—877